2:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

to prepare three songs for X, choosing as themes the usual *kusiotem* facts, with any additional details from the performer's myth which he may give them. The marshals instruct the maker of the successful mask to put hair on it and to attach a neck.

Four days later the same group again meets in the forest and X tries on the mask. When in position it rests on top of his own head with a stick passing down behind his occiput to his waist, where it is fastened by a belt; the general effect is that he has a superimposed head. Minor adjustments are suggested and made and X takes the mask, while the unsuccessful attempts are burnt. The marshals solemnly warn the participants of the seriousness of the rite in which they are about to engage. X conceals the mask with great care in some cleft of the mountains.

At intervals the singers meet and listen to the tunes each has composed, until they decide on the three most suitable, which they practise.

Nothing more takes place until after the winter solstice, when X and the marshals select the exact date for the rite. After a *qotlim*, the marshals, singers, carpenters, and other *kusiut* functionaries remain in the house to rehearse the coming ceremony. The head is placed in position, supported by a framework of reeds which can be separated by strong pressure. When X raises his blanket over his own head, the mask portrait alone is visible, and only the wearer's extra height might cause suspicion. Around his "neck," in reality the junction between X's own head and the false one, is tied a rope, so arranged that when pulled from each end, it slips, contracts on the reed framework, and ultimately tears through it to separate the head from the body.[11] Raw meat and blood have been placed inside the "neck" so that, when the mask is pulled off, it appears as if X's flesh were exposed and he falls to the

[11] An old man showed the writer the method of fastening, but I was unable to learn it. The rope, instead of being knotted, is wound within itself so that, when the framework is broken, it comes away untangled.